THE ORTHODOX WORL

March - April, 1976

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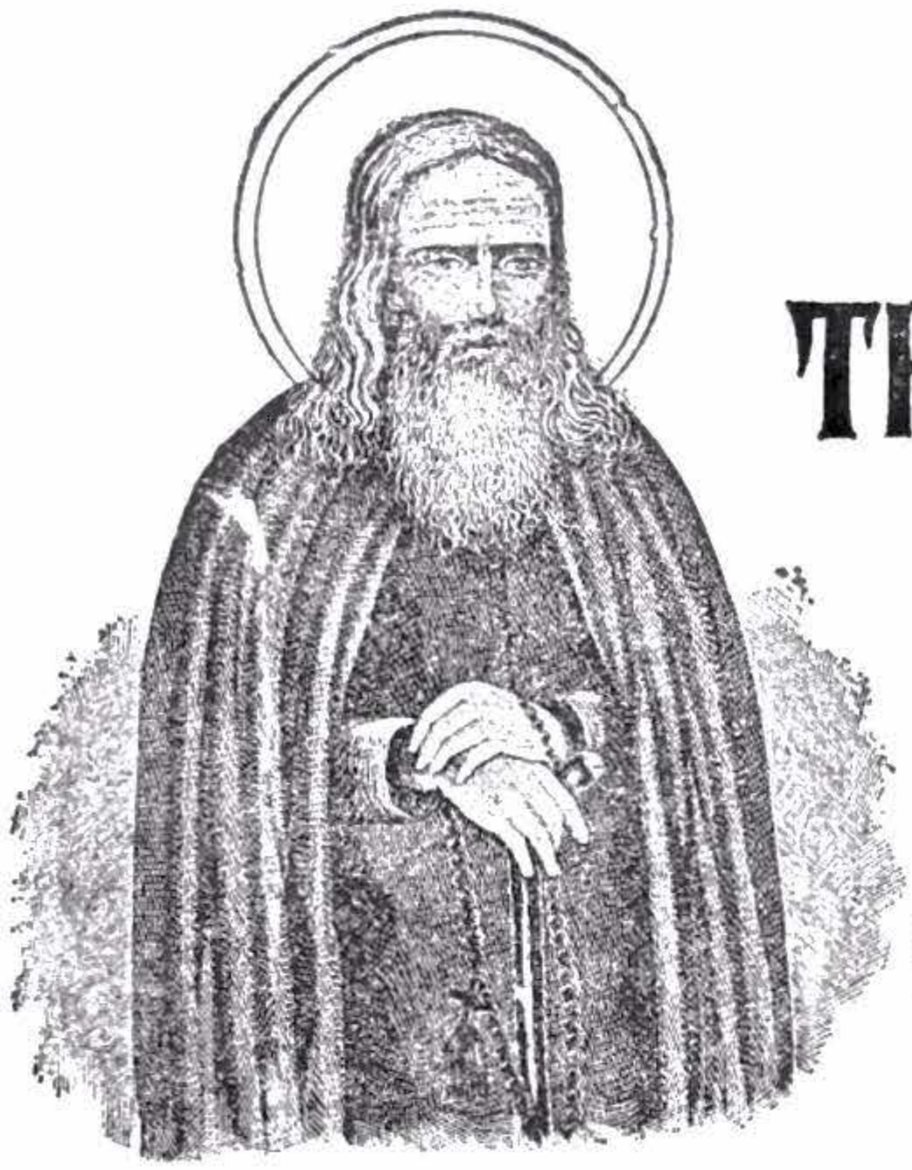

THE ORTHODOX WORD

A Bimonthly Periodical

OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF
SAINT HERMAN OF ALASKA

Established with the blessing of His Eminence the late *John* (*Maximovitch*), Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

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COVER: Archbishop John in Monterey, California, not long before his death.

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The 10th ANNIVERSARY
of the Repose of
Archbishop John Maximovitch

TEN YEARS HAVE PASSED since the death of our righteous one, Archbishop John Maximovitch. In ten years the dead are usually all but forgotten except by a few close ones, and even among the latter their memory is often faded by this time, being kept alive chiefly by the Christian obligation to pray for the repose of the departed.

Yet after these ten years the memory of Archbishop John remains fresh in the minds and hearts of many Orthodox Christians, both Russians and — perhaps even more — non-Russians. His purely local significance — among those who knew him personally — becomes less important with each passing year, and his universal significance, among those of many nationalities who call upon him in prayer and look to him as a guiding light of true Orthodox life and teaching in these dark times, ever increases. The very fact that in this dark age we have had in our midst a wonderworker in the spirit and tradition of the holy hierarchs of Christian antiquity, and that even today there is, in the midst of the corrupt Babylon which all the great cities of the contemporary world have become, a holy place, the righteous hierarch's sepulchre, where the Orthodox faithful come to pray for and to him — is a great source of consolation and spiritual strength for the Orthodox Christians of these latter times, who see around them the increasing coldness of a world from which the savor of true Christianity is evaporating.

In the past ten years there have been in *The Orthodox Word* a brief Life of Archbishop John (Nov.-Dec., 1966); information on his Sepulchre and help received there through his prayers (Sept.-Oct., 1968); a fifth-anniversary issue (March-April, 1971) revealing him as a man of prayer who worked miracles, an apostle to Western lands, and a staunch defender of true Orthodoxy; and numerous of his articles and sermons, as well as testimonies of his miracles both before and after his repose.

For the tenth anniversary of his repose the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood has published, in Russian, the *Chronicle* of Bishop Savva of Edmonton, and in this anniversary issue presents a number of materials on the righteous hierarch which have not previously appeared in English. May these revelations of a life which was a true miracle of our times be no mere object for astonishment and admiration, but a living source to inspire Orthodox Christians to a life in accordance with the fervent and true Orthodoxy which he embodied'

A Brief Biography

ARCHBISHOP JOHN MAXIMOVITCH

June 4, 1896 — June 19, 1966

Archbishop John was born in the village of Adamovka, Kharkov province, in the celebrated noble family of Maximovitch, being baptized with the name of Michael. He graduated from military school in Poltava, then from the Law Faculty of Kharkov University, and finally, after the Russian Revolution, from the Theological Faculty of Belgrade University, Yugoslavia. In 1926 he was tonsured a monk by his beloved teacher, Metrop. Anthony Khrapovitsky, with the name of John, in honor of his own relative, St. John Maximovitch of Tobolsk (†1715). From 1929 to 1934 he taught in the Serbian Orthodox seminary in Bitol, where he was already noted as a great ascetic and a holy man.

In 1934 Hieromonk John was ordained bishop and sent to Shanghai, where he devoted himself entirely to the needs of his refugee flock, to the raising of orphans (including many Chinese), to daily church services, and to immense labors of fasting and prayer, never lying down to rest for his whole life as a monk. In 1951, after seeing to it that his flock was safely evacuated from Shanghai, he became Archbishop of Brussels and Western Europe, and in 1963 Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco. On June 19|July 2,

ARCHBISHOP JOHN MAXIMOVITCH

AS HE LOOKED IN HIS LAST YEARS

1966, he died suddenly in Seattle (as he himself had foretold) while accompanying the wonderworking Kursk Icon of the Mother of God.

His funeral in San Francisco was a veritable triumph of Orthodoxy. For six days thousands came to his open coffin and kissed his holy relics, and even though the body was not embalmed, there was no sign whatever of decay. City officials gave unprecedented permission for the body to be buried in his Cathedral, in a basement sepulchre which to this day remains a place of prayer and miraculous intercession; the faithful ask for the help of this holy man, appealing to him as alive.

May the merciful Lord grant repose to his soul with the Saints, and by his holy prayers have mercy on us and save us!

Ukase No. 2-76

OF HIS EMINENCE ANTHONY, ARCHBISHOP OF WESTERN AMERICA AND SAN FRANCISCO

For the whole Diocese.

FRIDAY, June 19 (July 2) of this year will be the tenth anniversary of the day of the blessed repose of His Eminence John, Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco.

If Vladika had not yet reposed, but had continued in visible manner his activity as a local diocesan bishop, even then this year would have been a special one for him. For this is the year of the 80th anniversary of his birth and, something even more exceptional, the year of the 50th anniversary of his monasticism and priesthood.

Therefore, if now Vladika were to be seen, as before, in churches at the Divine-service books on the kliros, or before the altar of God, or in houses and in many hospitals with the Holy Gifts and with a word of consolation that instils faith and strength, then this would have been the year of his golden jubilee...

But it was another path that was pleasing to God. Tested by unceasing labor, by self-sacrificing and insistent intercession for those asking help, and by many, so many sorrows, our Vladika John reposed. And these ten years that have now passed have turned out to be filled to overflowing with the prayers of devoted and loving hearts for the repose of the soul of Vladika John, with

mental invocations of Vladika as of one living, and with prayers to God concerning our diverse needs with hope in the help of the reposed Vladika.

This also is a continuation of the life and activity of Vladika John... of a life saturated with prayer even from childhood and youth in Russia, and then with prayer and concern for people — in Serbia, in China, in the Philippines, in Europe and finally here in America.

And so, half a century from the days of Vladika's tonsure and his ordination to the rank of presbyter, together with the tenth anniversary of the day of his impetuous journey (as if in foreknowledge of the journey that was to follow) with the Wonderworking Icon, the Hodigitria of the Russian Diaspora, to Seattle and from thence the return journey, now in silence, *newly-reposed,* to San Francisco! This half-century and these ten years shine before us now as a single flame of life of the archpastor-ascetic, who continues to live, but already with *another* life: "where there is no sorrow."

Let us offer up in all our churches our humble prayers for the repose of the soul of the ever-memorable Archbishop John, who is praying for us.

†Archbishop Anthony
Secretary of the Diocesan Council,
Archpriest John Shachnev.

June 18|July 1, 1976
San Francisco, California

IN ACCORDANCE with this Ukase, the tenth anniversary of Archbishop John's repose was celebrated with special solemnity in San Francisco, first with the early-morning Divine Liturgy in the Sepulchre on the very day of his repose, then in the evening (near to the actual hour of his repose) with a requiem vigil in the Cathedral, and the next morning (Saturday) with the Divine Liturgy and a memorial service, also in the Cathedral, triumphantly ending the two-day celebration. The tenth anniversary was likewise observed in monasteries and parishes throughout the Russian Diaspora, in Serbia, where he is venerated as a "new lamp of Orthodoxy," and in Greece, where the True-Orthodox Christians hold him in special reverence. A moving expression of the feelings of this memorable day are the following words of Archimandrite Cyprian of the Old-Calendar Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina in Fili, Attica: "We have just celebrated with great reverence and emotion the tenth anniversary of the death of Vladika John Maximovitch. May his blessing and prayers protect us always!"

The "Discovery"
of Metropolitan Anthony

THE HOLY CHILDHOOD of Archbishop John, and his deep contact with the living sources of HolyRussia, were the foundation of the sanctity of his mature years. But there was one man who guided, who inspired, and pushed him in the particular direction of serving the Church of Christ as monk, priest, bishop and theologian. This was the great hierarch of the first part of this century, leading candidate to become Patriarch in 1918, and first Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Outside of Russia: Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky.

Young Michael Maximovitch came to Kharkov to attend Law School at the age of 18 in the very year (1914) when Metropolitan (then Archbishop) Anthony was assigned to be ruling bishop of this important city. In the brief three years which Metropolitan Anthony spent at this post he so gained the heart and trust of the young student, and so inspired him with the ideals of service to the Church and to Russia, that one may well say that it was he who formed the future hierarch. Later, in the years of banishment in Serbia, it was Metropolitan Anthony who tonsured him a monk and called him to be priest and then bishop, and who so grew to love him that he sent him to be bishop in Shanghai in 1934 "as my own soul, as my own heart."

The way in which Metr. Anthony inspired and influenced Archbishop John is best told in the latter's own words, in his article, based on personal experience, describing Metropolitan Anthony's years in Kharkov:*

"A special love and concern was evoked in Archbishop Anthony by young people. The students of the Theological Academies who passed through Kharkov made use of the Bishop's House as their own.... Vladika received them all with great cordiality, furnished them room and board and even money for innocent amusements. And in the evenings, having finished his diocesan business, he would call to his quarters all the guests and would spend time with them in instructive conversation until late at night.

*** Translated from *Orthodox Way*, Jordanville, 1950, pp. 6-9. For chapter one of this Life, see *The Orthodox Word*, March-April, 1974.**

"The seeds sown by Vladika fell deeply into the young souls. After leaving the hospitable Kharkov Bishop's House, they often remembered it later, many entered into correspondence with Vladika, told their friends about him, and they likewise strove to enter into personal or written contact with Vladika.

"Vladika strove to influence the working out of an Orthodox Christian world outlook in the students of secular institutions of learning also, and in every way possible he aided their moral education. When visiting the house churches of the educational institutions and celebrating Divine services there, he would always deliver profoundly instructive sermons directed to the mind and heart of teachers and students. Even young people who were far from the Church felt the spiritual gaze of Vladika directed upon them. This is why, when in 1914 the threatening events moving against Russia and the Slavic peoples evoked a patriotic enthusiasm among the youth, the student demonstration was directed precisely to the Bishop's House. Coming out onto the balcony of the second floor, in which the Bishop's Quarters were located, Archbishop Anthony addressed the students with a profound talk in which he expressed his view of Russian young people and his faith that in the depths of their soul they were always grateful and patriotic, while the contrary currents among them were only an imported, temporary phenomenon."

Above all young Michael was influenced and inspired by Archbishop Anthony's religious enthusiasm and loving pastoral care for young people. He continues his account (speaking of himself, although in the third person):

"Being concerned for the raising of the general moral level of young people, Vladika did not leave without attention each separate young person whom he happened to see; he would speak warmly with such a one. And if he happened to discover that anyone was so inclined that he might receive special benefit from himself, Vladika strove to seek out and see this person.

"Once Archbishop Anthony was informed that one of the leading representatives of the gentry of Kharkov province had an eldest son, a student, who was very interested in spiritual questions. Vladika did not delay in asking the father to bring the son to him. This was an unheard-of thing in Kharkov at that time, for not just anyone even among those of public position would dare to go to the Archbishop himself, who always had a number of visitors on business... Some months passed. The Archbishop's invitation was forgotten. Archbishop Anthony was invited to serve a moleben at one gathering in which the above-mentioned representative of the gentry participated. At the end of the moleben he went to receive the Archbishop's blessing. 'Why are you hiding

your son from me?' Vladika asked. 'Are you afraid I will make him a monk?' Thunderstruck that the Archbishop should remember his young son, the father affirmed that he was not hiding him, but that he had not considered it possible or convenient to bring a young person to an Archbishop so overburdened by important business. 'No, you must absolutely bring him; only then will I believe you, said Vladika. Returning home from the gathering, the father told this news, which astonished everyone...

"Somewhat upset by the situation, the father now decided to bring the son to the Archbishop, but it was literally as if something were hindering this. First the son became ill, then the father had to go away from Kharkov on business. And the visit to the Archbishop was put off to some indefinite time.

"Once Archbishop Anthony was giving a lecture in the Landowners' Hall. Among the listeners was that same student. During the intermission, he went up to receive Vladika's blessing. Those standing around Vladika indicated that this was the one about whom Vladika had spoken with his father. 'So it's you whom your parents are hiding from me!' Vladika cried out, embracing him. The latter replied that they were not hiding him at all, a proof of which was his very presence at the lecture. 'Then tell your father that he must absolutely come to me with you.'

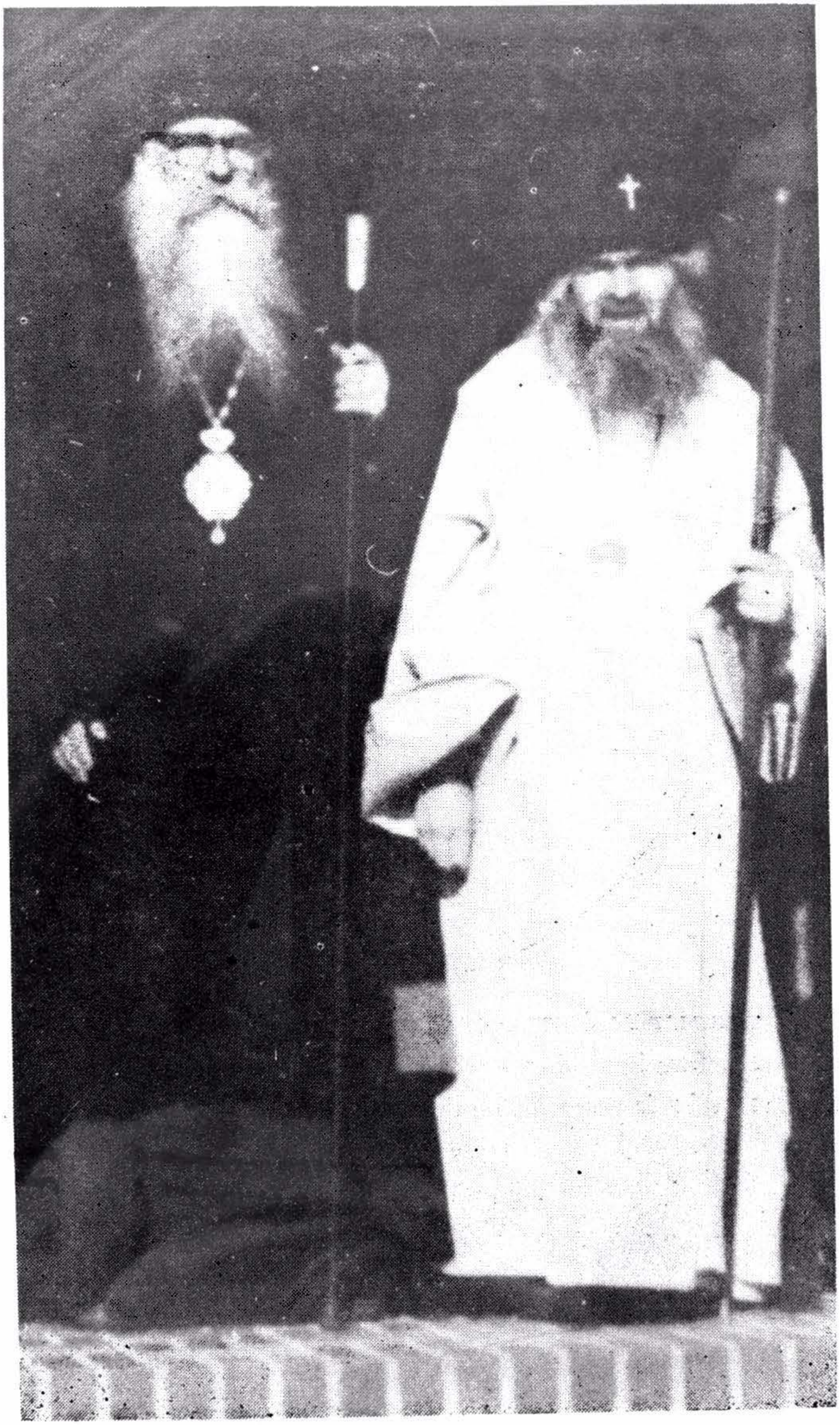
"After this nothing was left for the father but to go to the Archbishop with his son. Archbishop Anthony was not long in returning the visit and, not finding the parents home, but discovering that the children were home, he entered the house all the same, blessing the children and conversing with them.

"From that time on this whole family began to be in close contact with Vladika, coming to love their Archpastor warmly, and for all the years that followed they were spiritually guided by him. The young man whom Vladika had 'discovered,' having been spiritually educated under his guidance and direction, is now a bishop of the Russian Church Outside of Russia."

Archbishop Nikon of Washington and Florida, another spiritual son of Metropolitan Anthony, in his memoirs of Archbishop John (in the *Chronicle* of Bishop Savva, ch. 29), notes that the younger hierarch put into practice the pedagogical method which he learned from Metropolitan Anthony: "The essence of this pedagogical method consists in a personal concern, an education filled with care for each student, and the uncovering of spiritual life in his soul. The young Hieromonk John assimilated this method completely and joined it to a limitless labor of prayer..." And indeed, religiously-inclined young people who knew Vladika John can testify to the great interest and care

METROPOLITAN ANTHONY KHRAPOVITSKY (1863 - 1936)
just before becoming Archbishop of Kharkov. July 28|
August 10 of this year will be the 40th anniversary of his repose.

he took in inspiring them with Orthodox fervor and drawing them into the service of the Church, igniting in them the flame which had been kindled in his own soul by the warm heart of Metropolitan Anthony.



BISHOP SAVVA OF EDMONTON
(†1973, January 17|30)
With Archbishop John Maximovitch.

The CHRONICLE
of Bishop Savva of Edmonton

ORTHODOX LIFE, whether in parishes or monasteries or deserts, proceeds on its normal quiet course for the most part unobserved, being made up for the most part of the daily struggles of ordinary sinners who yet hope in their salvation. But by God's grace a part of this hidden life in Christ is made manifest in the outstanding examples of God's action among men and holy exploits undertaken in His name. The aim of these chronicles, whether of a single saint or a whole people, is to edify and inspire the new generation of Christian strugglers, who often grow faint and are tempted to relax in the battle to reach their heavenly homeland.

Especially in our days of feeble faith is the temptation strong to relax or give up entirely the struggle for salvation, and this century for Orthodox Christians sometimes seems, more than anything else, a chronicle of failures, material rather for idle gossip than for a worthy record. Where are the events in our time worthy of a chronicler like the great St. Nestor of the Kiev Caves?

And yet our inglorious century too is providing citizens for the heavenly kingdom, and even heroes of faith. They do not appear in outward glory and splendor, and one must look harder to find them than in earlier centuries; but they do exist, and they also await their chronicler.

One such chronicler of our times was the late Bishop Savva of Edmonton (†1973), who was so struck by the life of Archbishop John that he spent the last years of his life collecting materials for a whole book on him. Many of these materials were published in the church periodical *Orthodox Russia*, but much material remained unpublished at his death, and he did not have the opportunity to put all that he had into proper order as he wished. On his death he left this material and his unfinished book to the Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, which has taken as its sacred duty to continue and complete his work to the best of its ability. The book which has resulted is not a Life of Archbishop John, but rather precisely a *chronicle* of his veneration and of the manifestation of his holy life and miracles to the Orthodox Christians of these latter times. The first volume of this work has been issued

(in Russian) for the tenth anniversary of the repose of Archbishop John under the title: *A Chronicle of the Veneration of Archbishop John Maximovitch.*

The *Chronicle* is valuable first of all not as much for the actual material it gives as for its *evaluation* of Archbishop John. So often it happens in our times that true righteous ones finish their course in such humility and lack of outward glory that their memory soon fades into virtual oblivion and the benefit of their holy lives is largely lost for those who follow them.

A worthy chronicler like Bishop Savva can therefore do a great service to the Church precisely by his proper evaluation of the holy man he has taken for his concern. For this evaluation of Archbishop John, Bishop Savva does not trust merely his own opinions or feelings, but calls on many venerable witnesses. Thus, whole chapters or parts of chapters are devoted to testimony of Vladika John's holy life by Metropolitan Philaret (ch. 20), Metr. Anthony Khrapovitsky (chs.20-21), Archbishop Averky (ch. 1), Archbp. Nikon (ch. 29), Archimandrite Constantine (ch. 7), Bishop Nicholas Velimirovitch (ch. 13), Archpriest Valery Lukianov (ch. 22), the church historian Nicholas Talberg (ch. 23), and (the greater part of the book) the simple church people who experienced his love and the miracles worked by his prayers. Another very valuable part of the book is devoted to passages from the Holy Fathers and parallels from the Lives of Saints which shed light on Vladika John's sanctity.

But the most endearing part of the *Chronicle* is the testimony of Vladika Savva himself. In every word of his, and especially in his sermons on Vladika John (chs. 2, 3, 11), one feels the boundless love and veneration of the younger hierarch for the older, his fervor to communicate his *value* to the church people who cannot afford to lose such a treasure, and also his sorrow that in our times of the cooling of faith and love not many will understand him or see the need for such fervor. In his zeal for the memory of a man who was a true fool for Christ's sake in the midst of our 20th-century life (even church life) of calculation and petty logic — Bishop Savva himself became a fool for Christ, caring nothing for the opinions of this world as long as he could speak the truth concerning one who lived by the totally different standards of the Orthodox spiritual life.

A number of the materials gathered in this *Chronicle* have already appeared in English in THE ORTHODOX WORD, and more will be presented in future issues. May they be read and rightly treasured, remembering the testament which Bishop Savva has now handed down to those who follow him: "O Lord our God, according to Thy great mercy, *glorify Thy slave*, the ascetic and sufferer Vladika John, and forgive us, have mercy on us and bless us!"

The ORTHODOX THEOLOGY

of Archbishop John Maximovitch

NOT TOO MANY years ago the Abbess of a convent of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, a woman of righteous life, was delivering a sermon in the convent church on the feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God. With tears she entreated her nuns and the pilgrims who had come for the feast to accept entirely and wholeheartedly what the Church hands down to us, taking such pains to preserve this tradition sacredly all these centuries — and not to choose for oneself what is "important" and what is "dispensable"; for by thinking oneself wiser than the tradition, one may end by losing the tradition. Thus, when the Church tells us in her hymns and icons that the Apostles were miraculously gathered from the ends of the earth in order to be present at the repose and burial of the Mother of God, we as Orthodox Christians are not free to deny this or reinterpret it, but must believe as the Church hands it down to us, with simplicity of heart.

A young Western convert who had learned Russian was present when this sermon was delivered. He himself had thought about this very subject, having seen icons in the traditional iconographic style depicting the Apostles being transported on clouds to behold the Dormition of the Theotokos; and he had asked himself the question: are we actually to understand this "literally," as a miraculous event, or is it only a "poetic" way of expressing the coming together of the Apostles for this event .... or perhaps even an an imaginative or "ideal" depiction of an event that never occurred in fact? (Such, indeed, are

some of the questions with which "Orthodox theologians" occupy themselves in our days.) The words of the righteous Abbess therefore struck him to the heart, and he understood that there was something deeper to the reception and understanding of Orthodoxy than what our own mind and feelings tell us. In that instant the tradition was being handed down to him, not from books but from a living vessel which contained it; and it had to be received, not with mind or feelings only, but above all with the heart, which in this way began to receive its deeper training in Orthodoxy.

Later this young convert encountered, in person or through reading, many people who were learned in Orthodox theology. They were the "theologians" of our day, those who had been to Orthodox schools and become theological "experts." They were usually quite eager to speak on what was Orthodox and what non-Orthodox, what was important and what secondary in Orthodoxy itself; and a number of them prided themselves on being "conservatives" or "traditionalists" in faith. But in none of them did he sense the authority of the simple Abbess who had spoken to his heart, unlearned as she was in such "theology."

And the heart of this convert, still taking his baby steps in Orthodoxy, longed to know *how to believe*, which means also *whom to believe*. He was too much a person of his times and his own upbringing to be able simply to deny his own reasoning power and believe blindly everything he was told; and it is very evident that Orthodoxy does not at all demand this of one — the very writings of the Holy Fathers are a living memorial of the working of human reason enlightened by the grace of God. But it was also obvious that there was something very much lacking in the "theologians" of our day, who for all their logic and their knowledge of Patristic texts, did not convey the feeling or savor of Orthodoxy as well as a simple, theologically-uneducated Abbess.

Our convert found the end of his search — the search for contact with the true and living tradition of Orthodoxy—in Archbishop John Maximovitch. For here he found someone who was a learned theologian in the "old" school and at the same time was very much aware of all the criticisms of that theology which have been made by the theological critics of our century, and was able to use his keen intelligence to find the truth where it might be disputed. But he also possessed something which none of the wise "theologians" of our time seem to possess: the same simplicity and authority which the pious Abbess had conveyed to the heart of the young God-seeker. His heart and mind were won: not because Archbishop John became for him an "infallible expert"

— for the Church of Christ does not know any such thing — but because he saw in this holy archpastor a model of Orthodoxy, a true theologian whose theology proceeded from a holy life and from total rootedness in Orthodox tradition. When he spoke, his words could be trusted—although he carefully distinguished between the Church's teaching, which is certain, and his own personal opinions, which might be mistaken, and he bound no one to the latter. And our young convert discovered that, for all of Archbishop John's intellectual keenness and critical ability, his words much more often agreed with those of the simple Abbess than with those of the learned theologians of our time.

THE THEOLOGICAL WRITINGS of Archbishop John belong to no distinctive "school," and they do not reveal the extraordinary "influence" of any theologians of the recent past. It is true that Archbishop John was inspired to theologize, as well as to become a monk and enter the Church's service, by his great teacher, Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky; and it is also true that the student made his own the teacher's emphasis on a "return to the Fathers" and to a theology closely bound to spiritual and moral life rather than academic. But Metropolitan Anthony's own theological writings are quite different in tone, intention, and content: he was very much involved with the theological academic world and with the intelligentsia of his time, and much of his writing is devoted to arguments and apologies which will be understandable to these elements of the society he knew. The writings of Archbishop John, on the other hand, are quite devoid of this apologetic and disputatious aspect. He did not *argue,* he simply presented the Orthodox teaching; and when it was necessary to refute false doctrines, as especially in his two long articles on the Sophiology of Bulgakov, his words were convincing not by virtue of logical argumentation, but rather by the power of his presentation of the Patristic teaching in its original texts. He did not speak to the academic or learned world, but to the uncorrupted Orthodox conscience; and he did not speak of a "return to the Fathers," because what he himself wrote was simply a handing down of the Patristic tradition, with no attempt to apologize for it.

The sources of Archbishop John's theology are, quite simply: Holy Scripture, the Holy Fathers (especially the great Fathers of the 4th and 5th centuries), and — most distinctively — the Divine services of the Orthodox Church. The latter source, rarely used to such an extent by the theologians of recent centuries, gives us a clue to the practical, un-academic approach of Arch-

bishop John to theology. It is obvious that he was thoroughly immersed in the Church's Divine services and that his theological inspiration came chiefly from this primary Patristic source which he imbibed, not in leisure hours set apart for theologizing, but in his daily practice of *being present at every Divine service*. He drank in theology as an integral part of daily life, and it was doubtless this more than his formal theological studies that actually made him a theologian.

It is understandable, therefore, that one will not find in Archbishop John any theological "system." To be sure, he did not protest against the great works of "systematic theology" which the 19th century produced in Russia, and he made free use in his missionary work of the systematic catechisms of this period (as, in general, the great hierarchs of the 19th and 20th centuries have done, both in Greece and Russia, seeing in these catechisms an excellent aid to the work of Orthodox enlightenment among the people); in this respect he was above the fashions and parties of theologians and students, both past and present, who are a little too attached to the particular way in which Orthodox theology is presented. He showed equal respect for Metropolitan Anthony Khrapovitsky with his "anti Western" emphasis, and for Metropolitan Peter Mogila with his supposedly excessive "Western influence." When the defects of one or the other of these great hierarchs and defenders of Orthodoxy would be presented to him, he would make a deprecating gesture with his hand and say, "unimportant" — because he always had in view first of all the great Patristic tradition which these theologians were successfully handing down in spite of their faults. In this respect he has much to teach the younger theologians of our own day, who approach Orthodox theology in a spirit that is often both too theoretical and too polemical and partisan.

For Archbishop John the theological "categories" of even the wisest of theological scholars were also "unimportant" — or rather, they were important only to the extent that they communicated a real meaning and did not become merely a matter of rote-learning. One incident from his Shanghai years vividly reveals the freedom of his theological spirit: Once when he was attending the oral examinations of the senior catechism class of his cathedral school, he interrupted the perfectly correct recitation by one pupil of the list of Minor Prophets of the Old Testament with the abrupt and categorical assertion: *"There are no minor prophets!"* The priest-teacher of this class was understandably offended at this seeming disparagement of his teaching authority, but probably to this day the students remember this strange disruption of the normal cate-

chism "categories," and possibly a few of them understood the message which Archbishop John tried to convey: with God *all* prophets are great, are 'major,' and this fact is more important than all the categories of our knowledge of them, however valid these are in themselves. In his theological writings and sermons also, Archbishop John often gives a surprising turn to his discourse which uncovers for us some unexpected aspect or deeper meaning of the subject he is discussing. It is obvious that for him theology is no mere human, earthly discipline whose riches are exhausted by our rational interpretations, or at which we can become self-satisfied "experts,"— but rather something that points heavenward and should draw our minds to God and heavenly realities, which are not to be grasped by logical systems of thought.

One noted Russian Church historian, N. Talberg, has suggested (in the *Chronicle* of Bishop Savva, ch. 23) that Archbishop John is to be understood first of all as "a fool for Christ's sake who remained such even in episcopal rank," and in this respect he compares him to St. Gregory the Theologian, who also did not conform, in ways similar to Archbishop John, to the standard "image" of a bishop. It is this "foolishness" (by the world's standards) that gives a characteristic tone to the theological writings both of St. Gregory and of Archbishop John: a certain detachment from public opinion, what "everyone thinks" and thus the belonging to no "party" or "school"; the approach to theological questions from an exalted, non-academic point of view and thus the healthy avoidance of petty disputes and the quarrelsome spirit; the fresh, unexpected turns of thought which make their theological writings first of all a source of inspiration and of a truly deeper understanding of God's revelation.

Perhaps most of all one is impressed by the utter *simplicity* of Archbishop John's writings. It is obvious that he accepts the Orthodox tradition straightforwardly and entirely, with no "double" thoughts as to how one can believe the tradition and still be a "sophisticated" modern man. He was aware of modern "criticism," and if asked could give his sound reasons for not accepting it on most points. He studied thoroughly the question of "Western influence" in Orthodoxy in recent centuries and had a well-balanced view of it, carefully distinguishing between what is to be rejected outright as foreign to Orthodoxy, what is to be discouraged but without "making an issue" over it, and what is to be accepted as conducive to true Orthodox life and piety (a point that is especially revealing of Archbishop John's lack of "preconceived opinions," and his testing of everything by sound Orthodoxy). But despite all his knowledge and exercise of critical judgment, he continued to believe the

Orthodox tradition simply, just as the Church has handed it down to us. Most Orthodox theologians of our time, even if they may have escaped the worst effects of the Protestant-reformer mentality, still view Orthodox Tradition through the spectacles of the academic environment in which they are at home; but Archbishop John was "at home" first and foremost in the church services at which he spent many hours every day, and thus the tinge of rationalism (not necessarily in a bad sense) of even the best of academic theologians was totally absent in his thought. In his writings there are no "problems"; his usually numerous footnotes are solely for the sake of informing where the teaching of the Church is to be found. In this respect he is absolutely at one with the "mind of the Fathers," and he appears in our midst as one of them, and not as a mere commentator on the theology of the past.

The theological writings of Archbishop John, printed in various church periodicals over four decades, have not yet been collected in one place. Those presently available to the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood would fill a volume of something more than 200 pages. His longer writings belong for the most part to his earlier years as a hieromonk in Yugoslavia, where he was already noted as outstanding among Orthodox theologians. Especially valuable are his two articles on the Sophiology of Bulgakov, one of them revealing convincingly, in a very objective manner, Bulgakov's total incompetence as a Patristic scholar, and the other being of even greater value as a classic exposition of the true Patristic doctrine of the Divine Wisdom. Among his later writings one should mention his article on Orthodox iconography (where, incidentally, he shows himself much more aware than his teacher, Metr. Anthony, of the question of "Western influence" in iconographic style); the series of sermons entitled "Three Evangelical Feasts," where he uncovers the deeper meaning of some of the "lesser" church feasts; and the article "The Church: the Body of Christ." His short articles and sermons also are deeply theological. One sermon begins with a "Hymn to God" of St. Gregory the Theologian and continues, in the same exalted, Patristic tone, as an inspired accusation against contemporary godlessness; another, spoken on Passion Friday, 1936, is a moving address to Christ lying in the tomb, in a tone worthy of the same Holy Father.

We begin this series of translations with Archbishop John's classic exposition of Orthodox veneration of the Mother of God and of the chief errors which have attacked it. Its longest chapter is a clear and striking refutation of the Latin dogma of the "Immaculate Conception."

Hieromonk John Maximovitch in 1927

The Korsun Mother of God,
painted by P. M. Sofronov
in San Francisco
for Archbishop John.

Meet it is to magnify Thee,
more honorable
than the Cherubim and incomparably
more glorious than the Seraphim.

I.

The Veneration of the Mother of God during Her Earthly Life.

FROM APOSTOLIC TIMES and to our days all who truly love Christ give veneration to Her Who gave birth to Him, raised Him and protected Him in the days of His youth. If God the Father chose Her, God the Holy Spirit descended upon Her, and God the Son dwelt in Her, submitted to Her in the days of His youth, was concerned for Her when hanging on the Cross — then should not everyone who confesses the Holy Trinity venerate Her?

Still in the days of Her earthly life the friends of Christ, the Apostles, manifested a great concern and devotion for the Mother of the Lord, especially the Evangelist John the Theologian, who, fulfilling the will of Her Divine Son, took Her to himself and took care for Her as for a mother from the time when the Lord uttered to him from the Cross the words: "Behold thy mother."

The Evangelist Luke painted a number of images of Her, some together with the Pre-eternal Child, others without Him. When he brought them and showed them to the Most Holy Virgin, She approved them and said: "The grace of My Son shall be with them," and repeated the hymn She had once sung in the house of Elizabeth: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and My spirit hath rejoiced in God My Saviour."

The Orthodox Veneration of the Mother of God

by Archbishop John Maximovitch

However, the Virgin Mary during Her earthly life avoided the glory which belonged to Her as the Mother of the Lord. She preferred to live in quiet and prepare Herself for the departure into eternal life. To the last day of Her earthly life She took care to prove worthy of the Kingdom of Her Son, and before death She prayed that He might deliver Her soul from the malicious spirits that meet human souls on the way to heaven and strive to seize them so as to take them away with them to hades. The Lord fulfilled the prayer of His Mother and in the hour of Her death Himself came from heaven with a multitude of angels to receive Her soul.

Since the Mother of God had also prayed that She might bid farewell to the Apostles, the Lord gathered for Her death all the Apostles, except Thomas, and they were brought by an invisible power on that day to Jerusalem from all the ends of the inhabited world, where they were preaching, and they were present at Her blessed translation into eternal life.

The Apostles gave Her most pure body over to burial with sacred hymns, and on the third day they opened the tomb so as once more to venerate the remains of the Mother of God together with the Apostle Thomas, who had arrived then in Jerusalem. But they did not find the body in the tomb and in perplexity they returned to their own place; and then, during their meal, the Mother of God Herself appeared to them in the air, shining with heavenly light, and informed them that Her Son had glorified Her body also, and She, resurrected, stood before His Throne. At the same time She promised to be with them always.

The Apostles greeted the Mother of God with great joy and began to venerate Her not only as the Mother of their beloved Teacher and Lord, but also as their heavenly helper, as a protector of Christians and intercessor for the whole human race before the Righteous Judge. And everywhere the Gospel of Christ was preached, His Most Pure Mother also began to be glorified.

II.

The First Enemies of the Veneration of the Mother of God.

THE MORE the faith of Christ spread and the Name of the Saviour of the world was glorified on earth, and together with Him also She Who was vouchsafed to be the Mother of the God-man, — the more did the hatred of the enemies of Christ increase towards Her. Mary was the Mother of Jesus. She manifested a hitherto unheard-of example of purity and righteousness, and furthermore, now departed from this life, She was a mighty support for Christians, even though invisible to bodily eyes. Therefore all who hated Jesus Christ and did not believe in Him, who did not understand his teaching, or to be more precise, did not wish to understand as the Church understood, who wished to replace the preaching of Christ with their own human reasonings — all of these transferred their hatred for Christ, for the Gospel and the Church, to the Most Pure Virgin Mary. They wished to belittle the Mother, so as thereby to destroy faith also in Her Son, to create a false picture of Her among men in order to have the opportunity to rebuild the whole Christian teaching on a different foundation. In the womb of Mary, God and man were joined. She was the One Who served as it were as the ladder for the Son of God, Who descended from heaven. To strike a blow at Her veneration means to strike Christianity at the root, to destroy it in its very foundation.

And the very beginning of Her heavenly glory was marked on earth by an outburst of malice and hatred toward Her by unbelievers. When, after Her holy repose, the Apostles were carrying Her body for burial in Gethsemane, to the place chosen by Her, John the Theologian went ahead carrying the branch from paradise which the Archangel Gabriel had brought to the Holy Virgin three days before this when he came from heaven to announce to Her Her approaching departure to the heavenly mansions.

"When Israel went out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from among a barbarous people," Peter began Psalm 113; "Alleluia," sang the whole assembly of the Apostles together with their disciples, as for example, Dionysius the Areopagite, who likewise had been miraculously transported at that time to Jerusalem. And while this sacred hymn was being sung, which was called by the Jews the "Great Alleluia," that is, the great "Praise ye the Lord," one Jewish priest, Athonius, leaped up to the bier and wished to overturn it and throw to the ground the body of the Mother of God.

The brazenness of Athonius was immediately punished: the Archangel Michael with an invisible sword cut off his hand, which remained hanging on the bier. The thunderstruck Athonius, experiencing a tormenting pain, in awareness of his sin turned in prayer to the Jesus Whom he had hated up to then, and he was immediately healed. He did not delay in accepting Christianity and confessing it before his former co-religionists, for which he received from them a martyr's death. Thus, the attempt to offend the honor of the Mother of God served for Her greater glorification.

The enemies of Christ resolved not to manifest their lack of veneration for the body of the Most Pure One further at that time by crude violence, but their malice did not cease. Seeing that Christianity was spreading everywhere, they began to spread various vile slanders about Christians. They did not spare the name of the Mother of Christ either, and they invented the story that Jesus of Nazareth had come from a base and immoral environment, and that His Mother had associated with a certain Roman soldier.

But here the lie was too evident for this fiction to attract serious attention. The whole family of Joseph the Betrothed and Mary Herself were known well by the inhabitants of Nazareth and the surrounding countryside in their time. *Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren: James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?* (Matt. 13:54-55; Mark 6:3; Luke 4:22.) So said His fellow-countrymen in Nazareth when Christ revealed before them in the Synagogue His otherworldly wisdom. In small towns the family matters of everyone are well known; very strict watch was kept then over the purity of married life.

Would people really have behaved with respect towards Jesus, called Him to preach in the synagogue, if He had been born of illegitimate cohabitation? To Mary the law of Moses would have been applied, which commanded that such persons be stoned to death; and the Pharisees would have taken the opportunity many times to reproach Christ for the conduct of His Mother. But just the contrary was the case. Mary enjoyed great respect; at Cana She was an honored guest at the wedding, and even when Her Son was condemned, no one allowed himself to ridicule or censure His Mother.

(To be continued.)

THE RIGHTEOUS LIVE FOREVER

From Chapter 30 of The Chronicle of Bishop Savva

ONE OF THE MOST TOUCHING and impressive aspects of the life of Archbishop John is, quite simply, his continued presence among us. It is quite obvious, as one hierarch stated on the very day of Vladika's funeral, that he is not dead, but alive, and in many ways he reveals himself to those who believe in his sanctity. We do not have a record of many great or stunning miracles in these ten years (a proof more of our coldness and lack of faith than anything else), but there are many small indications that the believing Orthodox people are calling upon him as a living saint — and he is answering them, visiting them, appearing to them, guiding and inspiring them in the humble and sober path of true Orthodoxy. Many people prefer to remain silent about their "small" experiences of the closeness of Archbishop John; but the following testimonies are sufficient to show that this closeness is very real to those who seek his prayers and guidance. All the testimonies are from letters written to the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood; most of them were written in English, not Russian, and all but one are from people who did not know Archbishop John during his lifetime. They are arranged here chronologically, as they appear in the last chapter of the "Chronicle" of Bishop Savva.

1. "About Vladika John I know only what I have read in your magazine. Last year, after the 20th of October, my mother was in the hospital with a severe pain in the stomach. I was very upset, fearing that she might have

cancer; and then, in the night before the doctor was to tell me the results of the tests, I saw a dream. Many people were standing around a large white church with Russian domes. An old man in white came out of the church with a staff and came across the street straight up to my mother and me. When he came up to us I recognized from his photograph that it was Vladika John. He blessed mother and me, and I immediately woke up. I was not upset any more about mother. As it turned out, she had an ulcer which quickly healed. Now I think often about Vladika."

July 25, 1973 — T. H., Ontaria, Canada

2. "The portraits of Blessed Archbishop John Maximovitch arrived just at the time when we were leaving for Europe. Being somewhat suspicious of how safe our airplanes, buses, cars and trains are and trusting in the help of well-travelled Blessed John Maximovitch, we were very thankful that we could take his portrait with us on all our journeys. Actually, our friend M. tells us that he was saved from a car accident by a miracle worked by Blessed Archbishop John. M. had been driving in his car at nighttime at considerable speed when an enormous deer appeared at the side of the road and started dashing towards his car. But before the beast could reach the automobile it was suddenly stopped, and at the same time M. felt very distinctly the presence of Blessed John Maximovitch."

January 25, 1974 — B. N., South Dakota

(*Editors' note:* The following incident is from an American convert whose mother died without becoming Orthodox. He was in sorrow and uncertain how to pray for her when he received this answer from Vladika John, which he also interpreted as a sign "that we should be missionaries and show love and concern for the non-Orthodox around us.")

3. "I was reading in the afternoon from *The Orthodox Word* of May-June, 1974. First I looked at the photo of Vladika John's Sepulchre. As I did I read again the troparion for him and on finishing was moved to kiss his Sepulchre and said to him how sorry I was that I had not visited it more often in San Francisco when I had been there. I then glanced at a picture of my mother and asked him once again to pray for her and felt sure that he was praying for her. Then my eyes began to become heavy and they closed and I

entered into a kind of reverie during which I saw my mother with her apron on, talking much as she did in the last years of her life. Then suddenly I sensed that Vladika was praying for her. I then saw her again but this time down on her knees crying and saying how sorry she was for her sins. She cried so loudly and so bitterly that I could almost hear her actual voice in the room. I was impressed to join Vladika in prayer and not to open my eyes. I began to pray simply but fervently for God to have mercy on her, and I was conscious of Vladika's presence very strongly, though I did not see him as I did my mother. She continued to cry with great sorrow and finally disappeared. Soon I saw Vladika John, but only from the back. I could not see his face, only the veil of his kamilavka and the side of his beard, then the top of his episcopal staff and the sleeve of his rasson. He began to slowly walk away and I noticed clearly that he wore a plain black monk's mantle rather than an episcopal one. He then slowly exited with dignity and I never saw his face, but I was sure it was he. I then opened my eyes, arose, and again recited his troparion aloud facing East and kissed the photo of his Sepulchre.

"I do not know the full meaning of what I experienced... One thing I note is that Vladika said nothing and made no promises. I was simply assured of his prayers and of the need of my own and others'. I also note that he wore a monk's mantle and staff, rather than episcopal mantle and staff. This would indicate to me that he did what he did in a private capacity rather than as a bishop in official capacity, which would mean that he affirms the Church's prohibition of offering public prayers for departed non-Orthodox, but also affirms the teaching that private prayers for them are of great value and should be encouraged."

September 6, 1974 — J. M., Youngstown, Ohio

4. "Here is something I have not yet related to you, but about the deeds of saints one must inform the whole world. Several years ago, when I was in great sorrow, the late Vladika John (Maximovitch) appeared to me in a dream. I saw in the middle of our church a coffin, and in it Vladika John lying in his mantle. Vladika crossed himself, got up, and said to me: 'Pray for the slave of God Basil (who had died several years before) and for ...' (someone whose name I could not make out, but later I figured out that this was our roomer E. who had died)."

December 14, 1975 — A. P., San Francisco, Calif.

5. "My mother has an ulcer that cannot be operated on and has had trouble for the past three years. In 1975 she was hospitalized three times. She would become violently ill at night and the next day would be in the hospital. She would then lie in bed and take feeding by arm; in a few days she would come home.

"But in November of 1975 she was hit by another attack, and this time she had a fever of about 102 degrees or so (she is a small person and her normal temperature is 96). They said she could come home when the fever broke. My mother does not believe in God and His mercy, but this time she asked me to pray for her and I said I would. She had lain in bed for seven days and the doctors said they couldn't bring it down. So I received a piece of Vladika's mantle from a friend who knew the Blessed Archpastor. She told me to give my mother a piece of artos and holy water, and then to place the piece of mantle on her forehead and ask for Vladika to pray for us. I left her in the late afternoon and she then fell asleep, and the next day she was without the fever. In a day she was released and has been in good health ever since. The faithful all rejoiced in the miracle."

February 2, 1976 P. H., Burlingame, Calif.

6. "In the night into January 1 n.s., after praying to Blessed Vladika John Maximovitch and applying some oil from the lamp burning in his Sepulchre, on arising from sleep on January 1st I found that the bleeding which I had been experiencing for two days had stopped. Our Lord is glorified in His Saints!"

January, 1976 M. P., New Jersey

7. "This past Monday evening I had a dream about Blessed Vladika John of San Francisco, which I shall never forget as long as I shall live. It was the sort of a dream that I wished would not end, and I awoke with such joy and happiness, and I felt so unworthy that he should come to me in a dream. Blessed Vladika had on his cassock and his panagia. He was bent over looking at me sort of sideways, his hair was black with streaks of grey hair and he had taken off his glasses and said that he was happy for my ordination as a Deacon, and also he said: 'I am very happy also that you often pray for the sick during the services. Do not forget the sick, always pray for them, and visit them'; and I said, 'Yes, Vladika, I will.' Then T. our parishioner said

to him, 'Would you please tell me about some of the lives of the Saints from Ireland?' — for it pleased T. that Vladika in his earlier days had brought to attention the pre-schism Saints of the West. So Vladika and T. began to talk. And that was the end of the dream. Never in my life has anything more joyous ever happened to me. Before the dream I had been unemployed for over nine weeks, but the day after the dream I was hired... It is so necessary to pray to these blessed people who have loved Christ and His Church so much, and at the same time to do the things that they have done while they were on the earth (but I believe that in spirit they are still here). How often have we read about how Blessed Vladika John used to go and visit the sick, care for them and pray for them very often."

January 9, 1976 — Fr. D. S., New York

8. "I have included here a note which I had written back in 1972:

'Today a friend of mine, F. C., a Roman Catholic, told me of a dream he had last night. Yesterday I told him that when he goes to San Francisco next week he should stop at the Russian Synodal cathedral and get some oil from the lamp on John Maximovitch's grave for me. He told me his dream last night: when he went to the cathedral, he started taking oil from the lamp in huge quantities and then he heard a voice saying, "Tell M. to come here himself and get the oil." F. also told me he started to make the sign of the Cross in the Orthodox fashion, but was told he held his fingers improperly. He corrected this and then woke up in bed, making the sign of the Cross correctly in the Orthodox manner. His roommate, a Buddhist, asked him what he was doing, and F. just looked at him and said, "praying." Just thought I'd write this down — who knows? Is John Maximovitch a saint?'

"Later I travelled to San Francisco and went directly to the tomb after Divine Liturgy. I prayed at Vladika John's relics asking his forgiveness for previous scepticism of his sanctity... It means a lot to me that Vladika John brought me into the Synod and to San Francisco in particular to be near his holy relics."

April 27, 1976 — M. R., San Francisco, Calif.

THE ORTHODOX WORD

THE FIRST TEN YEARS of the veneration of Archbishop John have proved that he is not dead, but alive. His memory, far from dying out, is sacredly kept by more and more Orthodox Christians who hear of his holy life and inspiring deeds. He manifests himself to those who have faith in him and himself increases his own veneration. And each passing year uncovers new riches in his life and writings which are of direct help in the battle of our days to discover and preserve true Orthodoxy in an apostate world.

There is something in the veneration of Archbishop John — as in his life itself — which defies ordinary logic. It is not merely the strictness of his life that inspires us and attracts veneration, nor is it the correctness of his theology, nor his zeal and enthusiasm for everything that pertains to God and his Church, nor even his refreshing "foolishness." Perhaps it is the warmth and immediacy of his Christian love and concern, on top of all the other wonders of his life, that draw people to him in our age of coldness and spiritual decline.

The times ahead look dim for true Orthodox Christians. May the prayers of this holy hierarch of the latter days be our help, and his life and words be our guide in the days ahead when it will not be the wise or mighty or even the "correct" who will remain in the path of true Orthodoxy, but rather those who have learned, in humility of wisdom, to discern and savor the true working of the Holy Spirit, a shining example of which is our beloved Archbishop John. By his holy prayers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us! Amen.

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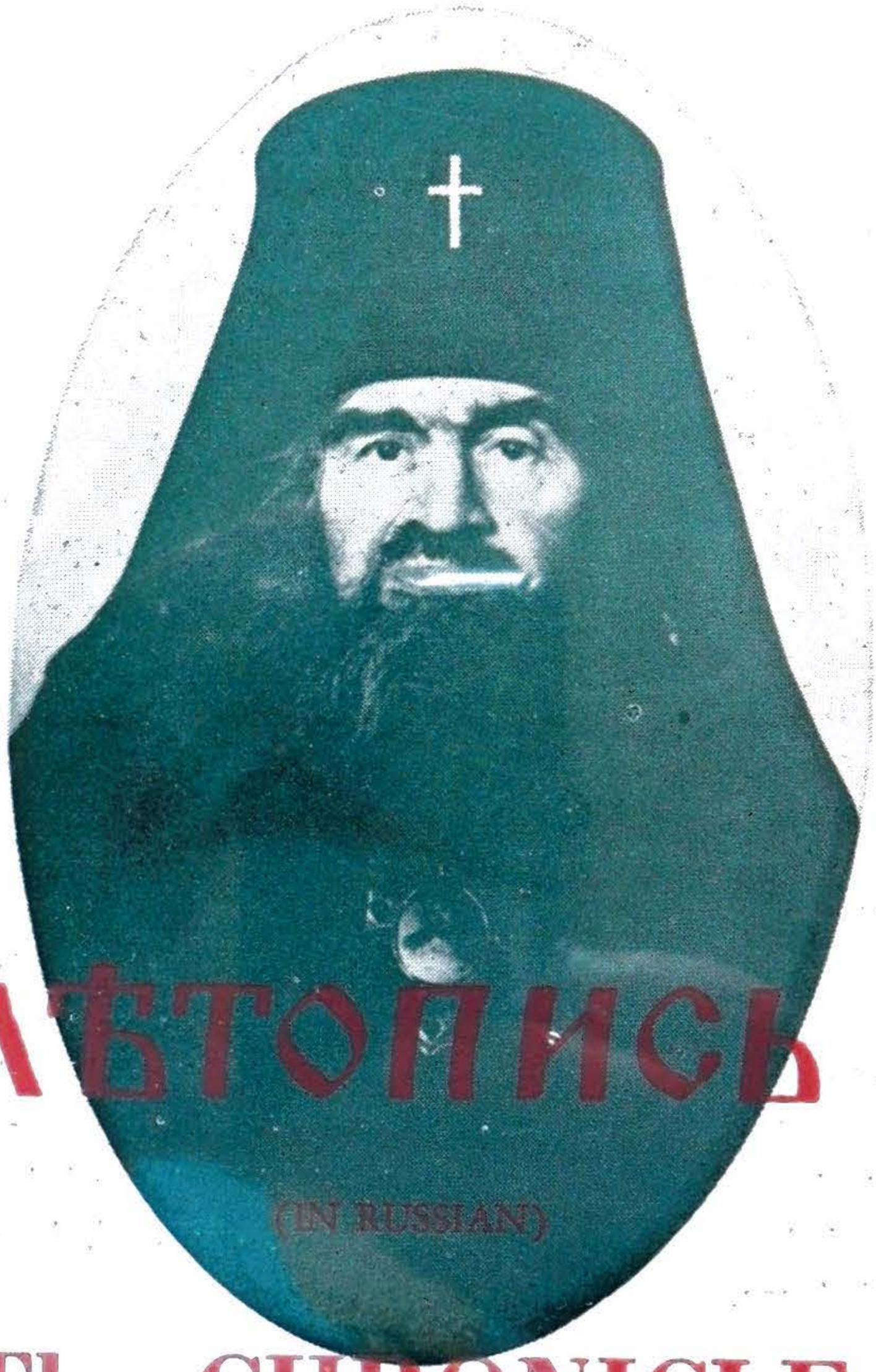

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